

Khartoum delivers protest to Egypt

KHARTOUM (AFP) — The Sudanese government has protested to Egyptian Ambassador Hassan Gud Al Haq for hiring a Sudanese national to carry out "hostile activities." Foreign Ministry official Hassan Abdin said Tuesday. Mr. Abdin denied, however, a report in the state-run daily Al Engaz Al Watani that Mr. Haq had been summoned to the ministry on Monday to receive a protest. A memorandum had been officially delivered to the ambassador, he said, protesting against "what we regard as a subversive act, ... especially by a sister country." The paper said that Mr. Haq told Sudanese authorities here that the Sudanese national, Mustafa Muftah Basha, had frequently visited his house and the embassy "Seeking assistance for medical treatment in Egypt." Basha was arrested by security officials and shown on national television confessing that he had been recruited by the Egyptian embassy to deliver threatening notes and packages of explosives to other foreign missions in exchange for large sums of money and a proposed job. Al Engaz Al Watani also claimed that Basha had been hired by the Egyptian embassy to tape record a scenario about Sudan's alleged support for international terrorism. Mr. Haq was reportedly told that his account of events was unconvincing, the state-run newspaper said.

Jordan Times

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17,000 ships checked for Iraq cargo

BAHRAIN (AP) — Allied warships, enforcing a tight blockade against Iraq, have intercepted 17,000 ships since they began their mission in August 1990, a U.S. navy spokesman said Tuesday. The spokesman said the 17,000th ship was Peter I, a container vessel registered in Vanuatu in the southwest Pacific northeast of Australia. It was stopped and boarded by a U.S. navy team in the Red Sea Monday. But no contraband cargo was found aboard and the team was satisfied with the manifest. The ship was allowed to sail on to Aqaba, he said. Of the total numbers of ships intercepted, 6,860 required boarding, the spokesman said. U.S. navy teams have carried out two-thirds of these missions. He said only 396 vessels so far have been diverted because of manifest irregularities.

Iraq years from new missile ability

MANAMA (AFP) — Iraq is years away from regaining the long-range missile capability it enjoyed before the Gulf war, a U.N. inspection team returning after two months in the Middle East country said Monday. The eight-strong team of ballistic experts returned to its U.N. base here Monday after a seven-week tour of Iraq, where its brief was to oversee the elimination of the country's ballistic weapons. Team leader Dennis Vincent, an American, told journalists that the mission — the 54th of its kind under U.N. auspices — was in general "positive" and that the Iraqis provided all the information the team had requested.

Arab allies discuss economic accord

DUBAI (R) — Finance ministers from six Gulf Arab states and Egypt and Syria began talks in Qatar Tuesday aimed at reviving their dormant two-year-old agreement on economic cooperation. The talks mark the first full meeting of finance ministers of the eight countries that signed the Damascus declaration, an economic and military agreement among Arab Gulf war allies, in March 1991 following the expulsion of Iraqi forces from Kuwait. Delegates contacted by Reuters said the ministers would discuss "implementing the economic subjects contained in the Damascus declaration." Egypt and Syria are hoping to ease unemployment at home through investment from a fund to be set up by the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) states.

Algerian bombing trial resumed

ALGIERS (AFP) — The trial of suspects in a bomb attack at Algiers airport that left nine dead last year resumed Tuesday at a special court here, but the hearing was boycotted by defence lawyers. In their absence, the three of the 55 defendants who appeared before the court refused to answer questions from the senior judge, but he had their written testimony read out loud. Lawyers boycotted that trial. Even after an official announcement Monday on an agreement between the heads of Algerian bar associations and the justice ministry on the "normal functioning of the special courts," the lawyers had been objecting to new legislation entitling court presidents to expel them from the court room or to suspend them for between three and six months.

Egypt bans media coverage of trial

CAIRO (AP) — The military attorney general banned further news coverage Tuesday on the trial of 14 Muslim militants accused of trying to assassinate a cabinet minister and attacking tourists. The restriction forbids local or foreign news organisations from reporting on the case. Major General Mohammad Abdullah imposed the ban after the 10 defendants in custody continued causing chaos during Monday's session despite earlier moves to silence them. On Saturday, Maj. Gen. Ahmad Abdul-latif, the military judge hearing the case, banished the defendants from court after they called him "butcher" and "murderer."

Israeli army kills 5 more Palestinians

Human rights group reports steep climb in number of children killed

JABALYA, occupied Gaza Strip (Agencies) — The Israeli army shot dead four Palestinians in the occupied Gaza Strip Tuesday and a fifth Palestinian died of wounds, Palestinian witnesses and hospitals said.

Troops shot dead at least three Palestinians and wounded at least 35 in a single incident in Jabalya town in Gaza, witnesses said.

The incident in Jabalya began when about 3,000 supporters of the banned Islamic Resistance Movement Hamas gathered for a memorial service for one of six Hamas members killed by Israeli forces on May 10 near the border with Egypt.

Army, paramilitary border police and plainclothes undercover units surrounded the orange grove where the service was being held and opened fire indiscriminately and without provocation, the witnesses said.

The gunfire surprised the mourners, who did not know the security forces were present. Started mourners fled in all directions between the trees while the shooting continued, the witnesses said.

An Israeli human rights group criticised the army Tuesday for the death of an 18-month-old Palestinian boy by a soldier firing at a memorial saw the army load two bodies carried on Palestinian flags into a military jeep. A third

body was taken by Palestinians, the witnesses said.

A Reuter correspondent who visited Shifa hospital in Gaza saw a 12-year-old boy identified as Atef Makousi who was shot in the neck and paralysed. The boy's brother Awni Makousi, 18, was one of the three killed.

The correspondent said the army prevented ambulance drivers, United Nations relief workers and Red Cross from going into the orchard to evacuate the casualties. He said soldiers were pushing the relief workers.

Hospitals said many of the wounded were shot in the upper body although army regulations instruct troops to fire at suspects' legs.

In a separate incident in Gaza on Tuesday, soldiers shot dead Taleb Ahmad Abu Ataya, 20, during a stone-throwing clash in Nuseirat refugee camp, officials at Shifa hospital said. Abu Ataya was described as mentally retarded.

Another youth, Kamal Aslan, 28, died Tuesday of gunshot wounds he suffered in a clash in Gaza Monday, Shifa said.

An Israeli human rights group criticised the army Tuesday for the death of an 18-month-old Palestinian boy by a soldier firing

at stone-throwing protesters.

The group Betselem accused the soldier of opening fire with no warning and without his life being endangered as youths pelted soldiers with stones Sunday in the Gaza Strip.

Betselem, or the Israel Information Centre for Human Rights in the Occupied Territories, also noted that 12 children died in army fire in December-May, more than in any six-month period in the Palestinian uprising.

The Hebrew daily Hadashot also criticised the army for the death Sunday of the Palestinian toddler, Fares Al Kord, in an editorial titled "Stop Killing Children."

Kord was shot as he stood near the entrance to a tyre repair shop in the Jabalya refugee camp, witnesses told Betselem and Hadashot. His father had sought refuge in the shop when trouble erupted in the camp, they said.

The shop owner, Mohammad Mussa Mussa Al Barai, said the boy was "about one metre inside the shop, very close to me and his father." The officer was about 25-30 metres away, lowered his gun and shot immediately. If he had done it more slowly, he would have been deeper into the store.



His Majesty King Hussein Tuesday meets with a delegation representing the Palestine Liberation Army (Petra photo)

King meets PLA team, reaffirms stands

AMMAN (Petra) — His Majesty King Hussein said Tuesday Jordan seeks to establish a just, lasting and sustainable peace which future generations will accept and defend. He noted that the road to such a peace is difficult, long and arduous.

Speaking at a meeting with a delegation representing the Palestine Liberation Army (PLA), which called at the Royal Court to congratulate the King on the 40th anniversary of the assumption of his constitutional powers, King Hussein said: "We have a duty towards the future generations — a duty to save the kinsmen in their occupied home-

land and to enable them to restore their rights on their national soil."

The King said Jordan "will continue to confirm all the challenges facing it, and will not despair."

"Challenges will strengthen our resolve to keep our heads high and not to bow to anybody except God," the King said.

He stressed the need for Arabs to advance and for Arab states to be "states of institutions capable of establishing strong and solid ties among the various Arab countries."

The King noted that Jordan has applied political pluralism and

the PLA to convey his greetings to Palestinian President Yasser Arafat.

The PLA Commander voiced appreciation and gratitude for King Hussein's honourable stands towards the Palestinian question, and said people in the occupied Arab territories "will not forget the King's heroic and firm positions and his support for them."

He conveyed President Arafat's best wishes to the King.

The audience was attended by His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan.

Israeli officer killed, 2 wounded in S. Lebanon

TYRE, Lebanon (Agencies) — An Israeli soldier was killed and two others were wounded in a bomb attack claimed by Hezbollah near the border in southern Lebanon Tuesday, security sources said.

"A militiaman of the Israeli-backed South Lebanon Army (SLA) and three civilians of Israel's self-imposed "security zone" in the region were also wounded in heavy shelling that followed the attack," they said.

The Israeli army confirmed the incident.

In Beirut the Islamic Resistance, military wing of the Hezbollah (Party of God), said later its guerrillas killed three Israeli soldiers when they attacked an Israeli patrol near the village of Rihane. Hezbollah sources said two guerrillas were seriously wounded in the fighting.

The Israeli army said the clash took place near the village of Sujud at 6:30 a.m. (0330 GMT) but military censors delayed reports of it for nearly 12 hours so that the army could first inform the families of the dead and wounded soldiers.

Sujud and Rihane are three kilometres apart and both about 16 kilometres north of the Israeli border.

They are close to the edge of the "security zone" Israel set up in 1985.

Lebanese security sources said the clash was with machineguns and anti-tank rockets.

Israel and its local militia ally, the South Lebanon Army (SLA), retaliated for the attack by shelling villages in the area.

Guerrillas fired mortar shells at Aishiyeh village in the "security zone," an SLA stronghold, and wounded two SLA soldiers and two civilians. One of the civilians was a three-year-old critically wounded in the head, Israel said.

Dr. Ashrawi said any documents that violated the terms of reference were unacceptable to the Palestinians.

Israel and the Palestinians failed to reach agreement on the principles of interim Palestinian self-rule in the occupied West Bank and Gaza Strip in the ninth round of peace talks which ended in Washington last week.

The Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) rejected at the close of the talks a U.S.-drafted joint Israeli-Palestinian statement on autonomy, but it left the door open for further talks with U.S. officials on principles.

The sources said more than 150 heavy artillery shells crashed into Iqlim Al Toufah, north of Rihane and 40 kilometres south of Beirut, and the explosions could be heard in the port of Sidon. One resident said shells were at times falling at a rate of three every minute.

Arabs, Israel resume arms talks

WASHINGTON (AP) — Arabs and Israelis resumed talks Tuesday aimed at ridding the region of nuclear, chemical and biological weapons.

The Middle East arms control talks, part of the Arab-Israeli peace talks, convened for their fourth session with some 40 countries and international organisations in attendance — including Israel, Jordan, Egypt, Saudi Arabia, the Gulf states, North African states, European countries, Japan and U.N. organisations.

The idea of such broad participation is to provide Arabs and Israelis with assurances of support as they undertake the delicate issue of cutting their arsenals of mass destruction.

Syria and Lebanon are boycotting the talks pending progress in their direct peace talks with Israel, where they are demanding that the Israelis exchange the occupied Arab territories for

peace.

For the first time since the arms talks began in January 1992, a Palestinian delegation also was participating. Israel had argued until now that the Palestinians were not a country and therefore should not take part in arms control talks, but changed its mind as a concession to advance its one-on-one peace talks with the Palestinians.

The arms control talks are theoretically modelled on the experience of decades of U.S.-Soviet disarmament negotiations. The United States and Russia has been working closely with the sides to prepare the sessions and guide the talks.

Israel is the only military power in the Middle East believed to have nuclear weapons. But Israel, Egypt and Syria are known to have chemical and biological weapons programmes. Environment talks in Tokyo next week, page 10.

Ashrawi: No discussion on U.S. draft statement

By Wafa Amr
Reuter

AMMAN — Palestinian peace negotiators will not discuss with U.S. officials a joint Israeli-Palestinian statement presented to them at the close of last week's peace talks, spokeswoman Hanan Ashrawi said Tuesday.

"We are not interested in a joint statement, because the joint statement is not in form or substance what we felt should be the way of addressing issues," Dr. Ashrawi told Reuters after meeting with Jordanian officials.

She said the peace negotiators should instead discuss separate declarations of principles by the Palestinians and Israel in order to formulate a joint declaration of principles bridging the gap between them.

Dr. Ashrawi said any documents that violated the terms of reference were unacceptable to the Palestinians.

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Talking to journalists Sunday night, Dr. Ashrawi refused to use the word "failure" about the ninth session of the peace talks.

However, she said the session has been a "negative test" of Israel's intentions and of the United States' readiness to keep its commitments.

On Monday, Liberty said that two employees of King Saud University in Riyadh, where a CDRL founder taught, had been arrested amid a wave of deten-

S. Arabia continues crackdown

NICOSIA (AFP) — Saudi Arabian authorities have arrested 44 backers of a recently-formed Saudi human rights movement, the London-based Liberty group said Tuesday.

Liberty, an Islamic human rights organisation, said 44 more sympathisers of the Committee for the Defence of Legitimate Rights (CDLR) were arrested.

Fourteen of the detentions occurred in the kingdom's Eastern Province while the remaining arrests took place in the Western Province. Liberty said in a statement faxed to AFP in Nicosia.

"The Saudi government is hereby requested to stop the harsh course of measures adopted against CDRL members and sympathisers," it said. "Liberty believes that such measures can only complicate things."

It appealed to international human rights organisations and parliaments in "world democracies to campaign for the release of Professor Mohammad Al Massari and his detained fellow citizens, and to pressure the Saudi authorities into putting an immediate stop to their campaign in the kingdom."

On Monday, Liberty said that two employees of King Saud University in Riyadh, where a CDRL founder taught, had been arrested amid a wave of deten-

No Iraq ties unless Saddam is gone, Kuwaiti minister says

KUWAIT (R) — Kuwait, calling Saddam Hussein a menace to the Gulf, has said it would normalise ties with Iraq only when his government was replaced by an administration that resolved outstanding issues between the two countries.

"He's a menace, a threat, not just to Kuwait but to all the Gulf countries," Information Minister Sheikh Saad Nasser Al Saad Al Sabah said of the Iraqi president Monday.

Iraq invaded Kuwait in August 1990 and claimed it as its 19th province. A U.S.-led military alliance of Western and Arab armies drove out Iraqi troops in February 1991.

Asked how long it would take to normalise ties, Sheikh Saad replied:

"It all depends on how long Saddam Hussein and his regime remain in power. Things could change very rapidly or they could take their time. I think we have to be ready to sit this out until we can get rid of him."

"Certainly Kuwait and Iraq are neighbours and they will remain neighbours forever. It is our intention that once there is a responsible regime in Iraq which respects international law and legitimacy and respect for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Kuwait, things could be normalised."

The minister said outstanding issues included the 620 Kuwaitis that Kuwait says were taken captive during the occupation and are held in Iraq. Iraq's refusal to recognise a new border and Kuwaiti claims for compensation for war damage.

Iraq denies it holds Kuwaitis captive.

Sheikh Saad said he had been shocked by the arrest last month of 16 people suspected of plotting to assassinate former U.S. Presi-

dent George Bush in Kuwait on orders from Iraqi intelligence.

Iraq has denied any links to the suspects. It said Mr. Bush, who was in Kuwait from April 14 to 16, was not worth the explosives.

State prosecutors on Monday charged 10 Iraqis out of the 16 with attempting to blow up Mr. Bush. An Iraqi and a Kuwaiti were charged as accomplices — also a crime punishable by death.

Two more people of unspecified nationality were charged with providing shelter for some of the 12 without knowing their intentions. The trial has been set for June 5.

Two others will be charged with smuggling alcohol and their case will be tried separately.

Mr. Bush's visit, aimed at honouring our Gulf war leadership, passed off without incident.

Sheikh Saad said the government was disappointed that Kuwaitis were among the suspects.

"This is very disappointing for us and very unfortunate to find out that a number of Kuwaitis were among the people that were recruited by these Iraqi agents," he said.

"They were misled, according to our information, that it was (meant to be) a pure smuggling operation, smuggling of alcohol and drugs. We are extremely disappointed and they will be treated as the Iraqi agents will be treated," he said without elaborating.

Our main concern is to improve our military defensive capability by these joint exercises, by training and (obtaining) up-to-date equipment."

Kuwaiti bank sues Iraqi banks

The National Bank of Kuwait sued Rafidain Bank of Iraq and the Central Bank of Iraq Monday for their alleged failure to pay back millions of dollars in loans.

The suit was filed in Manhattan federal court because a substantial part of the events allegedly occurred in the U.S.

Electrical Projects Co., which is an agency of the Iraqi government, is also named as a defendant.

Sheikh Saad also said security remained by far its top priority more than two years after the Gulf war.

Exercises: Palestinian youths from Hamas movement show military exercises with toy guns in Jabalya refugee camp, during a memorial day for



'EXERCISES': Palestinian youths from Hamas movement show military exercises with toy guns in Jabalya refugee camp, during a memorial day for

the Ezredin Al Qassam, the armed group of Hamas that was killed last week by the Israeli army (AFP photo)

MIDDLE EAST NEWS IN BRIEF

Many bedouin ineligible for nationality — Kuwait

KUWAIT (R) — Kuwait said it might grant nationality to some of the stateless Arabs who constitute almost 10 per cent of its population, but stressed many were ineligible. "We are now in process of sorting this issue out," Information Minister Sheikh Saad Nasser Al Saad Al Sabah said in an interview with Reuters Monday evening. "There are people who have a right to Kuwait nationality and who were unjustly denied it in the past for one reason or another, and they will be looked into soon on this issue, and their status will be corrected accordingly." But people who have no connection whatsoever according to the laws of Kuwait citizenship will not be given that citizenship. It's only right and just," he said. The issue of stateless Arabs has become increasingly controversial because of a debate over the 40 per cent fall in the total population to 1.3 million since Iraq's 1990 invasion. The population fell largely because of the departure during the occupation and its immediate aftermath of Palestinians and stateless and other Arabs seen by Kuwait as pro-Iraq. Official figures show there are 117,604 stateless people or "bedouins" in Kuwait, down from 220,000 in June 1990. Bedouins form a substantial part of armed forces personnel. Most of the bedouins are descended from nomads from the deserts of Arabia who settled in Kuwait but could not obtain citizenship because of strict nationality laws.

Saudi defence minister, Qatari emir hold talks

DUBAI (R) — Saudi Arabia's Defence Minister Prince Sultan met Qatar's Emir Sheikh Khalifa Ben Hamad Al Thani Tuesday for talks aimed at strengthening ties between the two countries who fell out over a violent border dispute last year. The Qatar News Agency quoted Prince Sultan as saying on his arrival in Doha that relations between the two neighbouring Gulf states were "firm and solid." Three people died in a clash on the border between Saudi Arabia and Qatar last September, prompting a three-month crisis. In December they signed an Egyptian-mediated deal which ended the dispute and paved the way for Qatar to lift a boycott of the Gulf Cooperation Council regional alliance.

Amnesty team to visit Morocco despite attack

RABAT (R) — Amnesty International said Tuesday it will send a mission to Morocco this week despite strong criticism from King Hassan. A spokesman for the London-based human rights group said the mission, led by its Deputy Secretary-General Herve Berger, was due in Rabat Wednesday for a visit of several days at the invitation of the Consultative Council for Human Rights. The multi-party council was appointed by the king three years ago to monitor human rights in Morocco and make recommendations to the monarch to improve them. There are also three other rights groups in Morocco, one of them independent and two others linked to opposition parties. "I say to Amnesty International it is an old and completely faded thing that has no further use," King Hassan told a French television journalist in an interview.

Kuwait seeks check on Bosnia captives

KUWAIT (R) — Kuwait has asked the International Committee of the Red Cross to check whether there are any Kuwaitis among Muslims held by Croat fighters in Bosnia, a Foreign Ministry official said Tuesday. The official, who declined to be identified, told Reuters Kuwait had asked the ICRC to obtain the names of any Arab captives in the embattled Bosnian town of Mostar to enable Kuwait to discover if any of its nationals were among them. The official said Kuwait had made the request following a report by a Kuwaiti humanitarian group that it was seeking United Nations help in trying to win freedom for a Kuwaiti mosque preacher held captive by Croat fighters in Bosnia. Tareq Al Issa of the Islamic Heritage Revival Society said Monday that the preacher, Kulaib Al Mutairi, had gone to Bosnia in December 1992 as part of a humanitarian mission by the society that helped Bosnian Muslims in need.

54 feared drowned in Somalia dhow accident

MOMBASA, Kenya (R) — Seven bodies have been recovered and 47 people were missing and feared drowned after a dhow taking Somalis refugees home capsized off the Kenyan coastal town of Mombasa Monday, police said. Police and navy divers had rescued 26 people and fished seven bodies from the Indian Ocean. "Of the 80 people on board, we have accounted for only those," Kenyan police spokesman Jeremiah Matagaro told Reuters. "The others are still missing, possibly drowned." He said navy divers had launched an intensified search for possible survivors and for bodies Tuesday. Mr. Matagaro said the dhow, named MV Sayed Mohammad, had 62 passengers and 18 crew aboard. One survivor told local newspapers the dhow capsized due to excessive cargo loaded on the upper deck.

12 killed in anti-drugs operation

TEHRAN (AFP) — Security forces have killed or wounded 20 traffickers in an operation in southeast Iran that netted 11 tonnes of drugs, Jomhuri Islami newspaper said Tuesday. Revolutionary Guards and the army seized six tonnes of drugs and set fire to another five tonnes, it said. Twelve smugglers were killed and eight wounded in a "surprise and coordinated attack." Security forces also seized arms and ammunition, including a multiple rocket launcher during the operation in the Saravan region of Sistan va Baluchestan province. The paper did not say when it took place or give other details. More than 60 tonnes of drugs — mainly opium, heroin and morphine — were haulled last year in Iran, the main transit route for drugs from Pakistan and Afghanistan headed for Europe.

Briton charged with helping Kurdish rebels

SILOPI, Turkey (AP) — Authorities Monday arrested a British journalist who crossed into Turkey from Iraqi-Kurdish controlled northern Iraq, an official said. The semi-official Anatolia news agency identified him as Andrew Norman Penny, 39, a free-lance journalist. It said Mr. Penny and Faik Bulut, a Turkish journalist for the pro-Kurdish newspaper Ozgur Gundem, were taken into custody two days ago for allegedly possessing illegal Turkish Kurdish documents and video tapes Saturday. They were formally charged with helping Kurdish rebels, who spoke on condition of anonymity. Silopi is near the Iraqi border.

Kuwaiti speaker wants strong Iran ties

KUWAIT (R) — Kuwait's Parliament Speaker Ahmad Al Saad said in remarks published Tuesday Gulf Arab states ought to maintain good relations with Iran because it was a strong country.

"There is no need to create a new antagonism with Iran in a time in which we need to strengthen our relations with it, being a strong country in the region," Al Watan daily quoted the opposition veteran as saying.

"We hope that Iran shares the same tendency (towards strengthening ties) with us. We cannot ignore its presence in the region," he added.

Hospitality towards Jordan still runs high in Kuwait because of Jordanian and Palestinian peoples' sympathy for Iraq during the 1990-91 Gulf crisis.

Mr. Saadoun added it was impossible for any early resumption of ties between Kuwait and the Palestine Liberation Organisation, Sudan or Yemen because of their sympathy for Iraq.

He added, without elaborating: "We must watch cautiously the political powers in Iraq, even the opposition, because it does not differ from the regime itself."

Freedom of expression would prevent extremism of any kind from taking hold in Kuwait, Mr. Saadoun was quoted as saying.

"I don't think that terrorism or extremism can grow in countries beyond its border," Mr. Saadoun said.

Tehran's ties with the GCC greatly improved after it denounced Iraq's 1990 invasion of Kuwait, but cooled again after the Arabs became concerned about its rearming and what neighbours view as its territorial ambitions.

Mr. Saadoun, reiterating widely held official views, added:

"It is impossible, at least for the time being, even to talk about having relations with some regimes such as the Iraqi regime... and also the Jordanian regime, which represents the head of the problem in the Arab region."

Kuwait abolished press censorship following its 1991 Gulf war liberation from Iraqi occupation. Newspapers have responded enthusiastically by regularly printing outspoken commentaries on a range of sensitive political subjects.

The October 1992 revival of the feisty national assembly following a six-year break has further spurred national debate.

"Whoever says there is extremism in Kuwait indicated that he does not know the people of Kuwait and the nature of this community," Mr. Saadoun was quoted as saying.

Newspapers said Mr. Saadoun said Islamic groups in Kuwait did not export "terrorism."

"There is no extremism or terrorism in Kuwait" because the Kuwaiti community is a peaceful one in which all enjoy freedom of opinion," he said.

Kurds 'do not want separate state'

WASHINGTON (USIA) — Kurdish representatives from Iraq and Turkey have affirmed that their people seek freedom and democracy within the countries they now inhabit — as opposed to the creation of an independent state.

"We realise it's difficult to change borders, and know that our solution now lies within the borders of the countries in which we live," said Ahmet Turk, chairman of the People's Labour Party in Turkey.

"The international climate is not conducive" to the creation of new states, said Barham Salih, the Iraqi Kurds' representative in Washington. "We think it is cost-effective to seek a united, democratic Iraq" that respects the rights of all its minorities.

Mr. Salih and Mr. Turk made the comments during a hearing sponsored by the Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE) on the status of the Kurds living in Turkey, Iraq and Iran.

Mary Sue Hafner, deputy staff director of the CSCE, noted that the hearing was the latest in a series of minority issues being held by the commission.

According to Mr. Salih, Iraq's Kurds agreed to prevent PKK guerrillas from using bases in Iraqi territory because "we have an obligation to our neighbours

to secure our borders... and address the legitimate security concerns of Turkey."

Both Mr. Salih and Mr. Turk also pointed to the goals of "freedom and liberty" as features that unite most Kurds. Mr. Turk noted that the PKK took a "reality-check" and recently announced that it would respect the territorial integrity of Turkey "as long as there is freedom for the Kurds."

He described the current ceasefire between the Turkish government and the PKK as "genuine" and urged both sides to make permanent peace. "The opportunity at hand must be seized and must be pursued," he said. Democratic forces around the world, Mr. Turk added, "should also give the Ankara government the moral support it needs" to realise peace with the insurgents.

According to Mr. Epstein, Turkey's leaders need to examine "whether Turkey can find a way to accommodate the legitimate Kurdish cultural aspirations, while maintaining its integrity as a state and its national character."

Barham Salih described the Kurds' successful experiment with democracy in their northern Iraqi enclave as a prelude to a reformed political system throughout the country.

JORDAN TIMES DAILY GUIDE AND CALENDAR

JORDAN TELEVISION

Tel: 773111-19

PROGRAMME TWO

18:00 L'histoire des Climats
19:15 News in French
19:30 French Varieties
20:00 News in Arabic
20:30 News in Arabic
21:00 Local Programmes
21:15 Soccer Match
22:00 News in English
22:20 Second Half of Match
23:00 The Gray Train

PRAYER TIMES

04:02 Fajr
(5:32) (Sunrise) Dhuha
12:32 Dhuhr
16:13 Asr
19:32 Magrib
21:02 'Isha

CHURCHES

St. Mary of Nazareth Church, Tel. 621740
Assemblies of God Church, Tel. 62785
St. Joseph Church Tel. 624590

Church of the Annunciation Tel.

637400
De La Salle Church Tel. 661757

Torremos Church Tel. 622366

Church of the Annunciation Tel.

623541

Anglican Church Tel. 630851. Tel.

628543.

Armenian Catholic Church Tel.

771331.

Albanian Orthodox Church Tel.

77261.

St. Ephrem Church Tel. 771751.

Antenna International Church Tel.

652526.

Evangelical Lutheran Church Tel.

824328.

The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-

Day Saints Tel. 623284. 654932.

Church of the Nazarene Tel. 675691.

WEATHER

Bulletin supplied by the Department of Meteorology.

It will be partly cloudy and there will be a chance for scattered showers of rain. Winds will be westerly moderate to fresh, becoming dust in desert areas. In Aqaba, it will be partly cloudy with chance for scattered showers, and winds will be northerly fresh and seas wavy.

USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS

NIGHT DUTY

AMMAN: Dr. Jamil Al Jafari 796450

Dr. Mohammad Al Ghoul 790730

Dr. Muhamed Alasas 612233

Firda pharmacy 778536

Al Asmaa Pharmacy 670053

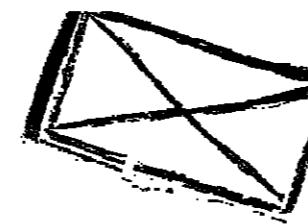
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Al Salam Pharmacy 636730

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Home News



BRIEF

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Hope despite negativism

HIS MAJESTY King Hussein set the right tone for peace in the Middle East when he voiced a certain measure of optimism about the ongoing peace process despite the fact that the last round appeared deadlocked on all fronts. In an interview with French Television Monday, the King confirmed that there is still optimism with regard to the Arab-Israeli peace talks despite the series of setbacks.

"I am optimistic," the monarch said, "in the sense that there is a peace chance." The King went on to warn that the present peace opportunity is the last chance to achieve comprehensive, just and lasting peace between the children of Abraham. The alternative "will be extremely bleak for the region."

In retrospect, the "failure" of the ninth round of bilateral peace parleys may not be all that real. There are several features in the last minute U.S. compromise text that are not totally negative. The Palestinians in fact saw some positive elements in the Israeli plan for Palestinian interim self-government formula after first rejecting it outright. If the Israeli scheme for the initial plan for self-rule was not found completely lacking at the end, then surely the U.S. compromise could be regarded as some kind of improvement on the draft Israeli plan.

After the dust has settled on the just ended round of bilateral peace negotiations, there are increasing signals that the situation is not all that hopeless. Palestinian spokeswoman Hanan Ashrawi indicated Sunday in Tunis that her side will continue the dialogue with the U.S. "with a view to producing a statement of principles." This means that the intent is still there to pursue the peace talks vigorously come the next round.

On other fronts, Suheil Shamas, the leader of the Lebanese negotiating team in the Washington bilateral peace talks, has only praise for the U.S. active involvement. The head of the Syrian delegation Dr. Muwafiq Allaf, while clearly critical of the ninth round of negotiations, described it as serious.

Against this backdrop, all parties need to exert additional effort to salvage the peace process, beginning with Israel which has yet to translate its acceptance of the applicability of U.N. Security Council Resolutions 242 and 338 to the occupied Arab territories into reality.

The warning of His Majesty King Hussein must not fall on deaf ears, for indeed the alternative is too dreadful to even contemplate.

ARABIC PRESS COMMENTARIES

AL RA' daily Tuesday commented on a statement by Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin which he stressed that Israel will not offer "good-will initiatives free to the Arabs." This statement can only reflect Israel's intransigent position at the negotiating table and its attitude which was obvious during the past nine sessions, the paper said. Furthermore, the against escalation of repression ongoing the Palestinians gives further proof that Rabin means what he says, the paper said. Mr. Rabin seems to be defying world community rules by ignoring the fact that abidance by the international legitimacy is imperative for Israel as it is for other nations, it continued. While the Arabs continue to show commitment to the peace process and to a lasting and honorable settlement, we hear the Israeli prime minister demanding a price for Israel's compliance with the international rules, the paper added. This is blackmail, exercised by Israel against the world community in general and the Arabs in particular, the paper stressed. It said that Mr. Rabin has to understand that the Arab countries' good intentions reflect their civilised attitude which is a requirement for the peace process to succeed. Only when Mr. Rabin respects this reality and deals with the peace process in a matter reflecting integrity and honesty can the doors for peace be open for all, the paper said.

SAWT AL SHABAB daily echoed a call by His Majesty King Hussein, in an interview with the French Television Monday, in which he warned against missing the present last chance for reaching peace. In his interview, the King was careful to note that the Middle East continues to suffer from the "residues of history" and from the lingering conflicts, tension and lack of stability. Even the Islamic faith did not escape the attempts of hostile forces which, the King said, are bent on distorting the true face of Islam and its true essence and nature. The paper echoed the King's warning that if the present chance to establish peace is lost, then the door will be wide open for further violence, strife, instability and insecurity. The time has come for the world community to respect the desires and aspirations of the people of this region, and the time has come for its peoples to wake up and shape up their own destiny, the paper said. It added that the Middle Eastern nations have long suffered from tension and conflicts and they have a right to security and stability like other nations of the world.

FACTS OF HISTORY

Not much has changed since the British left Palestine in 1948

By Pascal B. Karmy

May 15, 1948 marked the date of the termination of the British mandate over Palestine, one of the blackest milestones in the history of Palestine, which reflects adversely on the history of Great Britain when it was the mandatory power over Palestine. The British left Palestine in complete chaos and anarchy. Even before May 15 the mandatory power did not try or rather was unwilling to commit its forces to establish law and order. This was incumbent upon it in accordance with the mandate provisions as stipulated in the League of Nations Covenant and inasmuch as "the well-being and the development of the people of Palestine was a sacred trust of civilisation," in practice the sacred trust of Great Britain. Had it not been for the unenlightened, Balfour Declaration of 1917 and the extremely biased British policy towards the Jews, Palestine would have attained independence and become a state just as Syria and Lebanon had obtained their independence at the termination of the French mandate.

The British rule in Palestine was shameful and marred, for the Palestinians, the British sense of justice. British forces persecuted and repressed the Arabs, hanged many of them, imprisoned them without trial, exiled their leaders and detained them in the Seychelles and South Africa, some of them died in exile. The Emergency Defence Regulations of 1936 were strictly applied to the Arabs but rarely to the Jews. Those regulations were first enacted by the British government in Palestine in 1936 in order, among other matters, to detain without trial Palestinian Arabs for their rebellion against the Balfour Declaration and Jewish immigration. Those regulations were supplemented by Israeli Defence Laws, applied to the West Bank and Gaza Strip. On the other hand except for a few exceptions, the British authorities treated the Jews with leniency and their terrorists with indulgence although they committed atrocious crimes against the British, such as the blowing up of the King David Hotel, the centre of administration of the Palestine government, and the killing of British soldiers, hanging them from the trees.

The British closed their eyes to the shipment of arms and ammunition to the Haganah and other terrorist Jewish organisations while the British military courts tried and imprisoned any Arab found with the most primitive arms or bullets in his possession. It was even prohibited for any Arab to carry a dagger, for which offence he was liable for six months imprisonment. The British never stopped the immigration of Jews to Palestine despite Arab protests, demonstrations, strikes and revolt. Only during World War II did the British suspend the immigration of Jews to Palestine to win the Arabs to the side of the Allies in the war. This suspension of immigration was decided upon the recommendation of Lord Moyne, the British resident in Cairo who, as a result of this recommendation, was killed by Yitzhak Shamir's gang.

Against this backdrop, all parties need to exert additional effort to salvage the peace process, beginning with Israel which has yet to translate its acceptance of the applicability of U.N. Security Council Resolutions 242 and 338 to the occupied Arab territories into reality.

The warning of His Majesty King Hussein must not fall on deaf ears, for indeed the alternative is too dreadful to even contemplate.

Success of Yemeni elections prompts worries for Saudis

By Eric Watkins

THE ARRIVAL in Sanaa last week of senior envoys from the U.S. and Saudi Arabia has underscored the growing international significance attached to the successful outcome of Yemen's April 27 elections.

As the first multi-party poll ever held in the Arabian Peninsula, the Yemeni elections have been viewed as a potential harbinger of democratic change in the Arab World. But the U.S. and Saudi envoys, while granting qualified praise to the Yemeni achievement, have nonetheless sought to limit it in the interests of regional stability.

Mr. David Mack, the U.S. deputy secretary of state for Middle Eastern affairs, affirmed U.S. support for Yemen's transition to democracy, but Mr. Mack warned Yemenis against thinking they could impose their political "blueprint" on neighbouring countries. "It is important to remember that no country has a blueprint for democracy in another country... So I don't think you should look on what you do here as a model for anyone else to follow," he told Yemeni journalists.

A Gulf diplomat suggests that the Saudis may also be concerned about a potential Yemeni threat to their hegemony in the region. "The Saudis are taking a longer view of political development in the area and recognise that in 10-15 years Yemen could be an important political rival in the

Economic Forum

IF BAD COMES TO WORSE

Overtaxed citizens could pay more for imported goods

By Dr. Abdallah Maiki

One of the knottiest economic problems facing Jordan now is how the treasury can raise adequate domestic revenues to finance its expenditures without having to borrow. Now public revenues grow constantly; any measures aimed at checking these expenditures may very well lead to lower growth rates but not to negative growth. Rudolph Wagner coined a law which rightly states that public expenditures grow continuously.

We had tried our hand at solving the shortage of public funds through compressing public expenditures, but found out that this approach could not alone remedy the ailment. Therefore, a policy of aggressive taxation was initiated in 1989 and is still going on.

Again, the more-tax policy ran against capacity constraints. The Jordanians have been paying much more taxes than their taxable capacity, meaning that their tax effort is dangerously high. This situation cannot continue without jeopardising the economic and social fabric of society.

The formidable question therefore is how to increase public revenues without hiking tax rates or introducing new taxes (and fees). This is a question which challenges all parties in Jordan. We do not have a clear-cut answer, but we have a suggestion for a way out.

It is our conviction that the Jordanian fiscal problem can be solved only in the long run and that Jordan has therefore to depend on foreign grants in the short and medium terms. In the long run, the only alternative to tax increases is the broadening of the tax base, which can be achieved only through stimulation of production incentives.

Now this is a solution whose fruits come by only late and sometimes very late and therefore can easily and readily be rejected

by the impatient politicians and technocrats of the day. Our suggestion is that customs duties are the tax that has to be hiked if a tax increase is a must.

Raising customs duties has the double advantage of serving the treasury and providing protection for domestic products. And let us remember that domestic products here do not mean only industrial ones, whose protection is much resented by the IMF school of thought. Domestic products include also agricultural products (dairy products for example) and services. If higher tariffs are accurately targeted as to hit luxuries, they will suck money from the pockets of high-income groups whose demand for these luxuries is not deterred by higher prices.

If higher tariff rates deter importation, that will be a very desirable outcome which has to be hailed even if it means stagnation or even lower tax proceeds as this means conserving foreign exchange and making it available for tackling external indebtedness. Additionally, lower imports entail normally corresponding rises in domestic output which will generate fresh tax proceeds.

We do believe that increasing customs duties is ideally suited for a country like Jordan which encounters both a fiscal problem and a balance of payments one. Maybe the philosophy of free international trade and the universal vision that the IMF adopts and tries to enforce wherever it sponsors economic adjustment programmes make it difficult, or even impossible, for Jordan to follow this course of action. But this will be a mistake with which our government has to expect, and face all sorts of popular resentments and reactions which fiscal tightening entails.

M. KAHIL



New U.S. embassy tests Ukrainian diplomacy

By Rostislav Khotin
Reuter

WASHINGTON — The way Ukrainian Ambassador Oleh Bilorus tells it, he is the top diplomat to Washington of a new state in severe financial difficulties. This was the only suitable one.

"No one offered us anything, not the U.S. government, no one.

We looked at 20 buildings and this was the only suitable one," Mr. Bilorus said in an interview.

"But it cost 15 million and we could afford no more than four or five million."

Ukraine, the second most powerful former Soviet Republic with 52 million people, is taking foreign affairs seriously and, 17 months after independence, has established 25 embassies.

The Kiev government, locked in difficult negotiations with Moscow over dividing up former Soviet property abroad, abandoned all hope of getting any of the 18 buildings used by the Russian embassy's 500 employees in Washington.

Ukrainian diplomats, unused to hard-nosed negotiating in real estate markets, began a process of bringing down the price of the building — holding firm as the owners rolled back to \$12 million and then \$8 million.

Beating back competition from other buyers, the embassy finally snapped up the building for \$4 million after the Kiev government urgently provided the money in cash.

Then more trouble began. The building, in which George Washington took the decision to move the U.S. capital from Philadelphia to Washington in the 1790s, was designated as an architectural monument.

"We needed the permission of the U.S. government because it was considered part of the American heritage," Mr. Bilorus said.

"We managed to persuade the government it was in the United States' political and strategic interests to demonstrate how important it viewed relations with Ukraine."

Yemen's voting resulted in no clearcut majority for any party, but between them the current ruling coalition of the General People's Congress (GPC) and the Yemeni Socialist Party (YSP) won enough of the 301 seats in parliament to form a government. In power since the unification of North and South Yemen nearly three years ago, the GPC and YSP have signed a political charter renewing their alliance —

former Soviet debts while taking over most property abroad.

"The Russians didn't give us a single square metre and I'm certain we will get nothing," Mr. Bilorus said. "Expecting naively to be given something would get us nothing but humiliation."

The embassy's trade attache, Seryuy Kulyk, tells of the time Russia's consul-general in San Francisco welcomed him as a "guest in a Russian house" in the city.

"This really bothered me," he said. "I just kept thinking to myself: 'In what way was this a Russian house?' It's so unfair. Russia did not inherit Soviet property, but merely expropriated it."

In political terms, diplomats are cutting their teeth on the dispute with Washington over the Kiev parliament's delays in ratifying two treaties enshrining Ukraine's non-nuclear status.

The United States has expressed concern over the failure to approve the START-I and Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaties. Prime Minister Leonid Kuchma is in New York.

LETTERS

Give our lungs a break

To the Editor:

I was very pleased to read the article on the priority Jordan gives to environmental protection ("Environmental protection efforts outlined at U.N.-sponsored meeting," Jordan Times, May 17). I am also very pleased with the new era of openness that our young democracy has heralded in, which has given people like myself the courage to address publicly a variety of issues, environment being one on top of the agenda.

Take exhaust emissions from vehicles, for example. I know there is a law in place somewhere, but what are we doing about it? We get fined for all sorts of things on the roads, isn't it high time we got fined for this violation of the law? It is truly grim breathing these fumes going about doing our various chores.

Aysar Akrawi,
P.O. Box 35095,
Amman.

The Jordan Times welcomes letters and contributions from its readers on any subject they wish to tackle. Letters intended for publication, however, should contain the writer's full name and address as well. Names can be withheld only upon request and under special circumstances. Letters are subject to editing. The newspaper is not responsible for the return of unused manuscripts.

CAIRO — "You're not frightened are you?" inquires Dr. Naeer Iskander as he approaches the table.

"To see a dead body is always an awesome experience. But it is particularly so when that body is more than 3000 years old and belongs to a great king who, in his time, was regarded as a deity."

Dr. Iskander does not wait for an answer. Gravely he pulls on his white coat and peels back a sheet to reveal the head and shoulders of an Egyptian pharaoh, hands crossed on his chest in the long, deep sleep of death. What is most extraordinary about seeing the mummy is its almost perfect state of preservation — from the nails and hair to the skin tissue and even the facial expression. The normal process of decay has been arrested since the earliest days of history.

"I think," says Dr. Iskander, "that the ancient Egyptians knew — not what the meaning of microbes and viruses was — but they knew that the stability of the climate is responsible for preserving mummies. That's why the mummies were buried in one coffin inside another coffin, inside another coffin inside a tomb closed with one door, two doors, three doors: to preserve the stability of the climate inside the tomb. I have no evidence, but the way it was done looks like it was scientific. I am not saying that it was laboratory work, but at least it was trial and error."

Whatever it was that the ancient Egyptians used in developing their burial techniques — intuition, luck, trial and error,



This meticulously preserved mummy is thought to be an Egyptian lady of noble birth who lived during the 17th dynasty — 1570-1650 B.C. (WNL photo)

is ideally suited for the dual problem of free information, adoption and investment programme to follow the course of our government's reactions which are

ancient Egyptians were found after thousands of years; but also that to recreate this climate is the best and most efficient way to preserve the mummies in modern collections.

It was the discovery in 1972 of the tomb of Nefer at the famous step pyramid of Saqqara that put Dr. Iskander on the track of tomb climatology. Nefer was the court musician of one of the kings of the fifth dynasty in the Old Kingdom, and Dr. Iskander was surprised and fascinated to find his mummy in such good condition.

The archaeologist started to study the microclimate of the tomb for clues, and his findings encouraged him to apply the same environmental tests to other tombs in the Nile Valley. Gradually Dr. Iskander pieced together the evidence for a scientific relationship between the climate of the tombs and the state of the mummies found in them.

"With time," says Dr. Iskander, "I found myself deeply convinced that the two parameters of temperature and humidity were actually responsible for the condition of any of our mummies in any of our tombs."

It was a short step from this conclusion to the idea of building the special showcases in which the microclimate of the tombs could be recreated — an idea which has now paved the way for the forthcoming reopening of the long closed exhibition of royal mummies at the Egyptian Museum in Cairo.

It has been a costly project, but in 1986 the Egyptian Antiquities



Dr. Ibrahim Bakr

Organization signed an agreement with the Getty Institute of Conservation in Los Angeles — one of the wealthiest organisations of its kind — under which the institute would come up with the design of a prototype showcase for the royal mummies of the Egyptian Museum — a showcase which controls the interior temperature, humidity, levels of oxygen and nitrogen, as well as infra-red and ultra-violet rays.

"It looks like an incubator," says Dr. Iskander waving his hand at the sealed cases which are now installed in the exhibition room. But instead of keeping very young human beings alive, these "incubators" are keeping very old ones as dead as possible.

The reason why the climate of the tombs is so suitable to the preservation of the mummies is that it limits the activity of the live viruses, bacteria and microbes which are the main causes of the putrefaction and decay of the human body.

The study of the tombs themselves led us to the conclusion that if we were to reduce the activity of the microbes and the bacteria, it was very important to reduce the percentage of oxygen in the mummy's environment," says Dr. Iskander. "After burial, the tomb was closed and there was an almost complete separation between the atmosphere inside and outside the tomb. This is because the tomb is situated very deep in the mountains and at the end of a long passage. For this reason too, the temperature and pressure inside the tomb remain stable."

With this separation between the environment inside the tomb and the world outside, there was — over the years and centuries — a gradual fall in the level of oxygen within the tomb, says Dr. Iskander. The reason for this is that the growth of microbes and bacteria and the rust of metals in the tomb absorbed the oxygen by the process of oxidation. Eventually, in the best sealed tombs the level of oxygen falls to as low as 1 per cent. At the same time, the level of nitrogen rises.

"That was an idea at that time," acknowledges Dr. Bakr.

"We cannot bury the mummies again, as was thought in the past. So they are there in the museum and they will be exhibited in a respectable way with some photographs and some objects from the same period. The room will be well lit and air-conditioned."

"If the atmosphere remains stable for six weeks, then it should be OK for five years," says Dr. Iskander. "But all the same we keep checking it every one, two or three months." Dr. Iskander acknowledges that it is a complex system, but he claims that it is simpler, more reliable and less costly than the other hi-tech preservation system which the French developed for the mummy of Ramses II.

"The French system is to apply gamma rays to kill all the microbes," says Dr. Iskander. "Then the mummy is put in a sterilised showcase under a flow of air which passes through two very small biological filters to prevent any viruses or bacteria from entering the showcase, and to prevent the mummies of pharaohs of Egypt. So the opening is part of the effort to promote tourism."

The process of preparing the new showcases has been long and painstaking. First of all, the oxygen inside the cases has to be removed by pumping in nitrogen. This also has the effect of reducing the relative humidity to required levels. But it has to be done very slowly to prevent damage to the mummies.

"If we suddenly reduce the humidity level from 60 to 40 per cent, this would cause direct cracks in the surface of the skin of the mummies," explains Dr. Iskander. "So we do this over six weeks — very slowly and gradually. And bit by bit we calculate these amounts of humidity and nitrogen and we draw maps and graphs and charts to be sure that everything is in order and we keep observing all the mummies."

The mummies tell us very much about history and science, so their preservation is very important. Now we are studying the DNA — the genetic makeup of the mummies. We can study the family relationships between different mummies and the aging of the mummies. We can tell how old they were when they died and we can compare this with the written history to check it. The Egyptian tourist industry is the least reason to preserve these mummies. We are keeping them for the future. We do not know what might happen in the future in terms of new discoveries of the coming generations. But we have to preserve them as they are for the future" — World News Link.

Income-generating programme in Gaza provides funds, hope

By A. Lin Neumann

GAZA STRIP — The adjectives usually attached to the Gaza Strip are far from complimentary. This harsh corner of the occupied territory, wedged between Egypt and Israel, is a tiny land beset by turmoil and despair. Fenced off from Israel to the north and east and from Egypt to the south, the Mediterranean Sea on the west completes the sense of isolation and imprisonment that pervades life in the Gaza Strip. Poor, sanitation and overcrowding make daily life a challenge and Byzantine security measures require most male residents to carry a wallet full of identity cards and permits just to get around without arousing the ire of the Israeli occupation forces. It is a nervous, depressing place.

Over 775,000 people are packed into just 360 square kilometres in Gaza. The eight refugee camps — where over one third of Gaza's people live — are some of the most densely populated areas on earth. Gaza has been especially hard hit by the intifada because of its reputation as the seedbed of the uprising. In the last several years, Israeli reaction to the intifada has cut off most Gazan residents — three-fourths of whom are UNRWA-registered Palestine refugees — from the former jobs inside Israel resulting in an unemployment rate approaching 40 per cent. Not surprisingly, Gaza is one of UNRWA's most demanding fields.

Given these conditions, it's also no surprise that here in the Gaza Strip UNRWA has found an enthusiastic reception for its recent emphasis on supporting income-generation projects inside Palestinian communities.

"I think now, for the time being, we have to establish something for our people," explained Freij Tarazi, UNRWA's income-generation officer for Gaza. "The problem has been money. But now we can start something."

What UNRWA has started in Gaza is essentially a fledgling development bank making modest loans to local entrepreneurs. It is the agency's way of mitigating the dire economic consequences of continued Israeli occupation. For some recipients, it is a chance to leave the ranks of the unemployed and start a small business; for others, the UNRWA income-generation loans enable them to expand existing businesses.

The programme, begun in July 1991 and run by a small staff out of the UNRWA headquarters in Vienna under the Department of Development and Planning, is funding a wide range of businesses — from home-based knitting machines to a furniture factory. All share a common goal: to support and create sustainable, job-creating enterprises, primarily in import-substitution industries. Whatever the eventual outcome of peace talks between Israel and the Palestinians in the occupied territory, the development efforts of UNRWA are sorely needed. So far the results, while small, have made the Gaza effort something of a model for other UNRWA fields.

creation and import substitution because those activities will help to create an economic infrastructure for Gaza.

Mr. Pollock says that the service sector in Gaza acts mainly to serve Israeli markets, while indigenous industry shrivels through lack of capital and opportunity. "That's the reason we emphasise production over services." In some cases, that production is home-based. One recent afternoon in a classroom inside the UNRWA Vocational Training Centre in Rimal, Gaza, the hum of sophisticated knitting machines and the sounds of women's voices filled the air. The women, all clad in traditional head-scarves, some of whom are recent recipients of UNRWA loans, were now taking the next step on the road to entrepreneurial success.

The electronic knitting machines, micro-chip controlled Swiss-made Passap 6000s, look like a cross between a harp and a computer. The machines cost about \$4,700 each, and they require extensive training to operate. The dozen or so women in the UNRWA classroom are learning how to maintain the machines, each of which can produce six complete dresses or sweaters a day. Their teacher is a fellow loan recipient, Umm Yusef, whose training began in a centre in Beit Sahour in the West Bank, and later took on a role as a company-approved trainer in the Gaza Strip.

So far the programme has

made three loans of about \$5,500

each to women who have been

through the training and are eligible to set up their own home knitting business. Most of the women in the classroom, Mr. Freij Tarazi explained, have been working with less advanced equipment, producing only a few pieces a month for local sale.

With the advent of the income-generation loans, they can produce

clothing to augment the family income, while still permitting them to meet their responsibility for raising their children and caring for the home.

Umm Yusef is the kind of

successful small business owner

that the income-generation project promotes. Beginning with basic training in an UNRWA school, she was the first woman to receive funds from the new loan programme. Now, she has a small business producing knit sweaters and training others in the technology.

Elsewhere in Gaza, the evidence of the programme's effect on individual lives can be equally clear. Abu Hamdi's furniture factory, for example, had fallen into disrepair, largely as a result of the stress associated with the intifada. With a \$30,000 loan, he got the small store front factory up and running again, reemploying eleven workers to produce high-quality furniture for customers in the West Bank and Israel.

In another loan-funded workshop, the programme demonstrates how deeply Gaza needs the kind of small industry most economies take for granted. The small brake reconditioning business of the Nawwaf brothers started in November 1991 with a loan of \$25,000 from UNRWA. The two brothers learned their craft over a period of years spent working in Israel, but they grew tired of running the gauntlet of checkpoints and enduring the suspicions faced by Gazans inside Israel. They took their skill, their life savings and the UNRWA funds and created an industry that barely existed in Gaza, finding a ready market for brake reconditioning among Gazans who previous had to have the work done inside Israel.

"This is better," said one of the brothers. "I have my own shop now and my own business." If the income-generator programme continues on its successful path, that is a sentiment that will be heard with increasing frequency inside the Gaza Strip.

The writer, editor of the Sacramento News and Review in California, wrote this article based on a trip he made to the Middle East in 1992. The article was distributed by the United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA) Public Information Office in Vienna.

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UNEP boss says governments fail Rio Earth Summit pledge

NAIROBI (R) — The new head of the United Nations' environmental agency UNEP commented bluntly Monday that its budget had been cut despite pledges of more support at last year's Rio de Janeiro Earth Summit.

Elizabeth Dowdeswell of Canada said the United Nations Environment Programme's (UNEP) annual governing council met the lack of cash undermined the credibility of the 20-year-old agency.

In her first major address since taking over the U.N. watchdog a few months ago, Ms. Dowdeswell criticised both the world governments which fund UNEP and the agency itself and pledged to "reverse constructive damage to

the status quo."

"The question being asked by many is this: What happened to the agenda agreed at Rio (de Janeiro), which called for UNEP's role to be enhanced, for its resources to be expanded — and yet its budget has been shrunk," said Ms. Dowdeswell.

"Governments are ready to put only a quarter of the \$1.3 billion (they pledged) into the environmental fund. Is it any wonder that our critics view with scepticism the real commitment," she told the meeting at its Nairobi headquarters.

"Does it mean that Rio was nothing more than a show for the press, does it mean that the word of 120 heads of government means nothing," she asked.

Coca-Cola makes triumphant come back in Iran

TEHRAN (APP) — Coca-Cola has made a triumphant come back in Iran, 14 years after it was banned after the Islamic revolution as a symbol of undesirable Western culture.

Highlighting its success, Iranian newspapers have since Sunday carried half-page advertisements to extol Coca-Cola, even adding close to the radical anti-Western camp.

Cola said it had to print the advertisement to prevent the paper from closure because of a cut in government subsidies to the press, understood as part of its economic reforms.

"What can we do? If we decide not to print an ad for one reason or the other, what other choices do we have in light of the reform policies?" the paper asked.

President Ali Akbar Rafsanjani said last week that "paying heed to the press is not in the interest of society, and they (the press) have to be self-sufficient."

After its ban since the 1979 revolution which toppled the Shah, Coca-Cola found its way back onto the Iranian market last year through an ultra-modern

truck drive through Tehran with the red and white logo offering the "real thing." Coca-Cola is posing a serious challenge to the local company Zan-Zari, which produces its own version of the drink in unlabelled bottles.

Islam is among newspapers close to the radical camp opposed to the import of Western goods.

"It's not that it criticised the production of billboards in Tehran advertising products from the West,"

"We cannot remain indifferent when American and Western capital is creeping in through the economic front," the newspaper said.

Turkish bankers take new interest in north Cyprus

NICOSIA (R) — Eighteen commercial and offshore banks have sprung up in Turkish-held north Cyprus in the last six months, lured by the prospect of a united Cyprus joining the European Community (EC) and hopes of opening branches in Turkey.

"It is very difficult to set up new banks in Turkey now," said Demirhan Sayiner, governor of the central bank of the self-proclaimed Turkish Republic of North Cyprus (TRNC).

Eventually Cyprus will join the EC and these banks hope to have a place in the Community then," he told Reuters in an interview.

Cyprus has already applied to join the EC over protests by the Turkish-Cypriot north, recognised only by Ankara.

Cyprus has been split since 1974 when Turkey invaded the north to block an attempt by Greek-Cypriot coup leaders to unite the island with Greece, then led by a military junta.

Many Turkish Cypriots resent the way the Greek Cypriots went ahead with the application without their consent, but still look forward to the day when a future federation reunifying the island's two communities might enter the EC.

The central bank says six new Turkish-owned commercial banks have started up in the last six months, pushing the total to 20, serving a population of no more than 150,000 to 170,000.

Violence damaging S. African tourist trade

DURBAN (R) — South Africa lost up to 500 rand (\$160 million) in tourism earnings last year as a direct result of political violence, tourism chief Piet van Hoven has said.

Mr. Van Hoven, chairman of the Tourism Board (Satour) told a news conference the number of foreign tourists visiting South Africa last year drew by only 7.4 per cent compared to the board's expectation of 20 per cent.

"We have not had a violence-

free year in the past five years,

and before that (foreign tourists) had the moral problem of visiting South Africa because of apartheid," Mr. Van Hoven added.

Satour aims to boost domestic tourism, which contributes about 60 per cent of the country's earnings from tourism.

"A large section of the population did not have access to the industry before, which implies a significant growth for the industry in future," Mr. Van Hoven said.

Violence and political turbulence in the country come to an end as soon as possible. Only when the

safety of the international tourist

can be ensured, will visitors be attracted to South Africa on a larger scale," Mr. Heath said.

Satour said it was particularly pleased with the increase of tourists from Africa which showed a cumulative growth of 80 per cent last year compared to 1991.

More than two million people from African countries visited South Africa in 1991, an all-time record, Satour said.

Japan's corporate failures hit 6-year high

TOKYO (AFP) — Japanese corporate failures jumped to a six-year high in the year to March while the amount of liabilities involved reached their second highest level on record, a credit research agency has said.

Tekoku Data Bank Ltd. said the number of bankruptcies grew 22.7 per cent from a year earlier to 14,441 cases, the highest level since 1986, when 16,886 companies collapsed under the weight of a stronger yen.

Liabilities came to 7,446 billion yen (\$66 billion), down 4.2 per cent from 1991 record of 7,744 billion yen and the first decline since 1989.

The number of big corporate failures with liabilities of one billion yen or more jumped 22.8 per cent to a record 177 cases.

Most were concentrated in the December quarter when the Japanese economic slowdown was at its worst.

"The increase in bankruptcies was due to the prolonged economic stagnation and the recent yen's rise, which particularly hit export industries including car and electronics makers," Mr. Teikoku said.

The agency, which also blamed sluggish personal consumption from keeping inventories high and depressing investment, said the high level of corporate failures was expected to continue in the current year.

Bankruptcies in the manufacturing sector, accounting for the biggest share of failures, soared 43 per cent, although the transport and information sectors posted the sharpest increase of 55 per cent.

Construction industry failures were up 22 per cent but those in the real-estate sector were almost unchanged.

Major failures included housing products manufacturer Lec Inc., the first listed company to go bankrupt in Japan since 1986, with 25 billion yen in liabilities.

Another listed company, textile manufacturer Daiichiboseki Co. Ltd., went under with liabilities on 89 billion yen.

Mr. Teikoku said most of the failures were related to Japanese real-estate market's collapse or slow inventory adjustment.

Rouble plunges to 934 against dollar

MOSCOW (AFP) — The rouble fell sharply against the dollar in trading here Tuesday, plunging to 934 against the dollar compared to 886 at the last trading session on Thursday.

Offers were posted at \$58.5 million and demand at \$64.7 million with overall trading volume on the Moscow Interbank Currency Exchange listed at \$47.3 million.

The Russian money has been on a steep downward slide since last autumn.

Authorities have decided to begin holding trading session four days a week instead of the current two, a move aimed not at stemming the rouble's fall but at blunting the sharp drops at each trading session.

Clinton discloses financial holdings

president's.

All other individual stock holdings of the first family were valued at far less — in the range of \$1,000 to \$15,000, including shares in NYNEK Corp, Bell Atlantic Corp and Bellsouth Corp.

The statement covers 1992 and thus does not reflect any changes in Mr. Clinton's financial situation since he assumed the presidency on Jan. 20 this year.

Most of the Clintons' money appears to be invested in money market funds, a low-yielding investment that could either reflect a cautious approach to the financial markets or a desire not to own large blocks of stock in individual companies so as to avoid conflicts of interest.

Mrs. Clinton's stake in Little Rock law firm, the Rose law firm, was valued at between \$100,000 and \$250,000. She quit the firm when the Clintons moved to Washington to start his campaign.

The form also disclosed that Mr. Clinton last year paid off two campaign loans taken to help finance his 1990 gubernatorial election campaign.

He had borrowed between \$100,000 and \$200,000 for that campaign.

Marks and Spencer makes record profits

LONDON (AFP) — The Marks and Spencer store chain announced a 25 per cent increase in annual results to a record high and regained its position as the most-profitable British retail group from the J. Sainsbury food outlet Tuesday.

The group reported pre-tax profits for the year to March of £736.5 million (\$1.12 billion) from £588.9 million one year earlier. The result, which was more than analysts had expected, was achieved on a two per cent increase in sales to a record figure

Honda earnings plunge 32%

TOKYO (AFP) — Japan's Honda Motor Co. Ltd. said Tuesday that its consolidated pre-tax earnings fell by 32.3 per cent from the figure a year earlier to \$8.6 billion yen (\$763 million) in the year to March.

The company, which ranks as Japan's third biggest carmaker worldwide, said that group sales fell by 5.9 per cent to some 4.152 billion yen in the same period, mainly depressed by sluggish sales in North America and Japan. This was offset by stronger sales in other Asian countries and South America.

For the coming year, Honda forecast a net profit of 23 billion yen, down from 38.3 billion yen in the latest year, on reduced revenue of around 4,000 billion yen. The company made no projection for pre-tax earnings.

Honda said that the lower revenue forecast mainly reflected the impact of the stronger yen. "Although the world's major automobile markets seemingly will continue to dwindle, Honda is planning to expand its sales mainly through the introduction of new models," the company said in a statement.

Analysts said Honda's failure to introduce new models since October were partly responsible for the company's weak domestic sales.

Peter Broadman, an analyst at the Tokyo branch of UBS Securities Ltd. reckons the company suffers from a poor product mix compared with its competitors. Moreover, Honda has failed to make an aggressive entry into the lucrative recreation vehicle market, he said.

In the year just ended, car revenue fell 9.1 per cent to 3,290 billion yen while sales volume dropped 8.6 per cent at 1.79 million units.

MOROSCOPE

FORECAST FOR WEDNESDAY MAY 19, 1993

By Thomas S. Fierson, Astrologer, Carroll Righter Foundation

GENERAL TENDENCIES:

Show that you are one who is considerate of others and that you are willing to go out of your way to provide charm in your surroundings. Arguing puts you behind the eightball. Avoid new purchases and gossip.

ARIES: March 21 to April 19 Come to a new and a better agreement with those you regard as usual and dependable allies and show them your true understanding of issues you have.

TAURUS:

May 20

You can add much charm and whatever others like in the duties you perform today so extend this as far as possible, tonight seek data in confidence.

GEMINI: May 21 to June 21 A fine day to make arrangements with congenial companions for the various social and recreational events you anticipate, then quietly do necessary planning of details.

MOON CHILDREN: June 22 to July 21 A touch of beauty here and more operative skill there at home will make your residence more harmonious, tonight you can quietly enjoy pleasures.

LEO: July 22 August 21 Be less legal and more aware of the needs and desires of usual comrades which will please them very much and tonight enjoy your home comforts.

PISCES: February 20 to March 20 You have an excellent day to sit down and work out with your mate a new set of circumstances which can bring you both greater well-being.

Peanuts



Andy Capp



Mutt 'n' Jeff



THE Daily Crossword



Bosnian Serbs bury their dead

FAKOVICI, Bosnia-Herzegovina (Agencies) — Bishop Vasilije, giving the Orthodox blessing to the remains of 17 Serb villagers killed by Muslim Slavs, was emphatic: "Behold the fruit of hatred and false brotherhood."

It was an open call for the physical separation of Bosnia's war-embroiled communities, at a time when the Bosnian Serb leadership is pressing for a separate state.

The bodies of the old men and some women were unearthed last Sunday at Ratkovic, a hamlet perched in the mountains 20 kilometres from the nearest paved road on the way to the Muslim enclave of Srebrenica.

Locals said the villagers were killed in a Muslim raid last June. Their bones were brought here for burial alongside the 100 civilians, partisans, killed by German militia, lying in the memorial to the dead of World War II.

Katkovic too has been caught up in the guerrilla war raging in eastern Bosnia for the past year. All Serb dwellings were set on fire, when Muslim groups mounted an expedition against the village last September. Only the tiny Orthodox Church and the priest's house were left standing.

"The killings will go on for another 100 years if we do not find an intelligent solution enabling us to separate Serbs, Croats

and Muslims," warned General Milan Gvero. He was among a large turnout of Bosnian Serb military at the burial of the Ratkovic victims.

Mediators Lord Owen and Thorvald Stoltenberg ventured into Bosnia's war zone Tuesday in a new effort to bring peace to the former Yugoslav republic.

They were heading for the Bosnian Croat town of Medjugorje for talks with Croatian President Franjo Tudjman and Bosnia's Muslim President Alija Izetbegovic.

Medjugorje, a place of pilgrimage for Roman Catholics, is near the southwestern Bosnian city of Mostar, where Muslim and Croat forces have battled for the past eight days.

A U.N. spokesman in Geneva said the meeting might take place in Mostar if the warring factions observed a truce.

Bosnian Serbs, in a referendum whose result is seen as a foregone conclusion, have overwhelmingly rejected the Vance-Owen peace plan.

Mostar was the scene of a massive explosion Monday night, when Croatian radio said was caused when a Muslim ammunition dump blew up.

Croats and Muslims, once allies against the Serbs, have turned against each other in an attempt to grab territory.

U.N. officials described the

security situation in the town as "very dangerous" with access controlled by Croat forces.

Russian Foreign Minister Andrei Kozyrev, accompanied by his Deputy Vitaly Churkin, arrived in the Croatian port of Split at the start of a mission to promote a new peace effort by Mostar.

Spanish and Danish foreign ministers were also in Split Tuesday, although it was not clear whether they would meet the mediators.

Mr. Kozyrev has expressed his backing for a peace plan for Bosnia worked out by Lord Owen and Cyrus Vance, Mr. Stoltenberg's predecessor.

Mr. Kozyrev, who was expected in Belgrade later Tuesday, said the international community would not let "a few militants and warlords" in Bosnia get in the way of peace.

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Russian efforts on Bosnia received a setback Monday when the United States made clear it would not attend a meeting of U.N. Security Council foreign ministers planned by Russia to discuss the future of peacekeeping in Bosnia.

Diplomats said the snub reflected disunity among Security Council members over what to do about Bosnia and they forecast

Russia would cancel the session. France appealed to the United States and Russia to send troops to Bosnia to help protect Muslims in U.N.-declared "safe areas."

"We wish that the big powers come to relieve our efforts. I think especially of Russians and Americans," Foreign Minister Alain Juppe told the newspaper *Le Figaro*.

"It is the responsibility of all those who want to assume responsibilities in European Security."

France has proposed increasing the 9,000 U.N. peacekeeping forces in Bosnia to 40,000 to protect Sarajevo and six other largely Muslim enclaves designated safe areas.

In Belgrade, the U.N. refugee agency said aid convoys carrying desperately needed food were on their way to Muslim-held areas in Bosnia Tuesday after Serb forces had held them up for several days.

The convoys were bound for Srebrenica, Zepa, Gorazde and the capital Sarajevo — all declared "safe areas" by the U.N. this month — following an accord between the Bosnian Serb army and U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) officials.

UNHCR spokeswoman Lyndall Sacha said: "People in these areas are very vulnerable because they have small stocks of food. Without these convoys there would be a quick slide into suffering."

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Sports

Juventus finally find Platini's heir

MILAN (AP) — It took three years to realise it, but Juventus may have found its long-sought heir to Michel Platini.

Roberto Baggio, Italian soccer's most expensive transfer when he reluctantly joined the Turin team in 1990, has produced a streak of outstanding performances in recent months that has fans dreaming of a revival of the club's triumphant era with Platini in the 1980s.

Baggio's imaginative play this season has taken Juventus to this year's UEFA Cup final. He scored two goals in his team's 3-1 road victory in the first leg against German team Borussia Dortmund earlier this month and Juventus can seal the title Wednesday in the second-leg match at Turin.

The UEFA crown would signal a comeback of sorts for Juventus, Italy's most popular and once most successful team. The club has gone three years without a major title and hasn't won an Italian League championship in seven years.

French forward Platini, supported by number of Italian internationals including World Cup star striker Paolo Rossi, was a key to two of La Juve's four league championships, plus its Champions Cup and Cup-winners Cup titles in the 1980s.

Now, with Baggio leading the charge, fans are looking for more titles in the 1990s.

"Baggio now has the black-and-white colours in his heart — he has become the team leader," said club President Giampiero Boniperti, who recently extended Baggio's contract through 1996. The player will reportedly receive about \$2.5 million a year.

Baggio, a crowd favourite when he played with Fiorentina, had initially opposed his transfer to Juventus at a record fee of about \$15 million.

His departure from Florence touched off riots by groups of Fiorentina fans and his declared love for his former team caused him the dislike of Juventus supporters. Baggio even refused to kick a penalty against Fiorentina during his first season in Turin.

This season Baggio, unfettered from tactical duties and left free to play the way he likes, exploded with 33 goals — 19 in league games, six in the UEFA Cup, three in the Italian Cup and six with the Italian national team. He scored all his team's goals in the UEFA Cup semifinal against powerful Paris St. German.

Such numbers have put Baggio in contention for Europe's biggest honour — the Golden Ball Trophy awarded every year to the best player on the continent.

"He's a player of great class, who can invent goals and beautiful moves," said AC Milan's Dutch star Marco Van Basten, three times voted as best European player. "He deserves the Golden Ball award."

Jordan leads Bulls to Eastern Conference finals

RICHFIELD (AP) — In a building where his heroes have become routine, Michael Jordan did it again Monday night.

He sank a remarkable fallaway

jump from the right side of the foul line at the buzzer, beating the Cleveland Cavaliers 103-101 and sending the Chicago Bulls to the Eastern Conference finals for the fifth straight time.

The victory was the Bulls' ninth consecutive in the playoffs, dating to last year's NBA finals. They swept Atlanta in three straight and Cleveland in four straight so far this season.

Jordan, still bothered by the sprained right wrist sustained last Thursday, scored 31 points on 11-of-24 shooting. He also grabbed nine rebounds.

With the score 101-101, the Bulls rebounded Craig Ehlo's missed shot and called time with 18.5 seconds left. They then got the ball to Jordan, guarded closely by Gerald Wilkins. As the final seconds ticked, Jordan — his back to Wilkins — wheeled and faded, letting go of shot that nestled into the net as the buzzer sounded.

The shot was only a few feet away from the spot where he sank a 16-footer over Ehlo to beat Cleveland at the buzzer in a deciding first-round game in 1989. It also came on the same floor where Jordan scored a career-high 69 points in 1990.



Michael Jordan

SPORTS NEWS IN BRIEF

World champion fails dope test

Tyson gets thumbs-down

SOFIA (AP) — The women's world discus champion and Olympic silver medalist Tsvetanka Christova has failed a dope test. The Bulgarian Athletics Federation said Tuesday that both Christova, and another discus thrower, Stefania Simova, have failed an initial A-test. The samples were taken during a visit to Bulgaria in late March by officials from the International Amateur Athletic Federation. Their second, or B, samples will be examined by the IAAF/Olympic sports laboratory in Cologne, at a date yet to be decided.

New squad formed to replace air crash victims

WASHINGTON (AP) — Ice skater Dorothy Hamill and gymnast Mary Lou Retton are top of the sports pop in America — but boxer Mike Tyson got the thumbs-down. An opinion poll carried out by Sports Marketing Group found that Retton, Olympic champion 1984, headed the popularity stakes with 55 per cent, equal with 1976 champion Hamill. Basketball star Michael Jordan won 47 per cent of the votes and American football quarterback Joe Montana 44 — but Mike Tyson won the "most disliked" award with a third of the votes, followed by tennis player John McEnroe.

Knicks' Riley named Coach of the Year

NEW YORK (R) — Pat Riley, who guided the New York Knicks to the best record in the Eastern Conference at 60-22, has won the Red Auerbach Trophy as the NBA Coach of the Year for the 1992-93 season, the National Basketball Association announced Monday. Riley, who also won NBA coach of the year honours in 1990 with the Los Angeles Lakers, becomes the fifth coach ever to win the award twice. He edged Houston Rockets coach Rudy Tomjanovich by one vote in the closest balloting in the award's 31-year history.

Marseille remain cautious

PARIS (R) — Marseille, almost un-touchable as they head towards a record fifth successive French League title, remained strangely cautious as they prepared for a decisive fortnight in which their main target is the European Cup.

The French leaders romped to a 4-1 win over Lille Saturday, taking their lead to four points with just three games to go, but were reluctant to claim the title as it was in the bag.

With their attention beginning to shift towards their date in Munich with AC Milan May 26, Marseille players and officials were in no mood to count chickens before they hatch.

"We've opened up a gap and taken a new and important step towards the title," captain Didier Deschamps said. "But it's not all over yet. It's up to us to finish off the job properly."

A slip-up could be dangerous as Marseille receive their main rivals Paris St. Germain three days after the European Cup final in the penultimate league match of the season.

"The four points we have over Paris St. Germain and Monaco are an advantage but they are no luxury and we can't say we're champions yet. We have to be careful," Goethals added.

On the pitch, however, his

team are oozing confidence as they showed once more in an almost insolent demolition of Lille. Strikers Alen Boksic and Rudi Voeller both scored and midfielder Franck Sauzee grabbed another to sound a warning to their Italian opponents in Munich.

These three key players, have reached the closing stages of the season in splendid form and, with Milan patently struggling of late to find their peerless excellence, it would be rash to consider Marseille as outsiders for the European title.

Paris St. Germain dropped a point in a 1-1 draw in Bordeaux despite dominating the match impressively. But goalkeeper Bernard Lama blundered badly to hand the home side an equaliser.

Unable to pick up a back pass from a defender, he tried to dribble past Christophe Dugarry but lost the ball and suffered the indignity of seeing the Bordeaux forward score with a shot which went between his legs.

It was Lama's second major blunder in recent weeks. He failed to cut out a simple back pass in a World Cup qualifier in Paris last month, allowing Sweden to take the lead with a soft goal — though France recovered to win 2-1.

Seles stabbing casts shadow over French Open

PARIS (AFP) — This year's French Open will certainly go down in history — but not for the reasons the organisers would have liked.

Last month's on-court stabbing of Monica Seles has ensured that the first Grand Slam tournament to take place in its aftermath will be cloaked by an unprecedented degree of security.

Long delays and frayed Parisian nerves seem inevitable following the decision to introduce body searches for every spectator throughout the two-week tournament.

The loss of the world number one is a major blow for the organisers.

It was here, in 1989, that Seles first granted her way onto the world stage by reaching the semi-finals and her absence will inevitably devalue the achievements of whoever succeeds her as champion.

That 1989 semi-final when she lost to Steffi Graf in three sets, was the last time Seles lost on the red clay at Roland Garros and 1993 should have been the year she became the first woman to win four straight French Open titles.

But now, instead of preparing a re-run of last year's classic final against Graf, when she won 18-8 in the final set, Seles will be watching the tournament on television, knowing that if her biggest rival wins, she could also lose her number one ranking.

The odds on a Graf victory must be fairly short. Her defeat of Gabriela Sabatini in the final of the German Open Sunday showed how limited the competition is for her and Seles is at the top of the women's game.

Despite a string of unforced errors from the German, Sabatini was unable to capitalise and has now gone without a tournament win since last year's Italian Open.

With Martina Navratilova again skipping the French to concentrate on her Wimbledon preparations, Arantxa Sanchez Vicario looks like the only serious opponent standing between Graf and a third French title.

Sanchez has had a good season. She has won four tournaments, beating Graf in all but both Key Biscayne and Hamburg. In ambition she knows that on clay her powers of retrieval can frustrate Graf's hitting power as she did when she beat German in the 1989 final.

They say Agassi hits the ball hard but compared to Jim he is like a choir boy," said Fabrice Santoro, one of the bemused unfortunates on the receiving end of Graf's strong-arm style.

On current form, Courier's most serious rival in Paris will be Stefan Edberg. The Swede, who won in Madrid last month, has devoted more time than ever before to his preparation on clay and believes he is capable of winning the only Grand Slam title he has yet to claim.

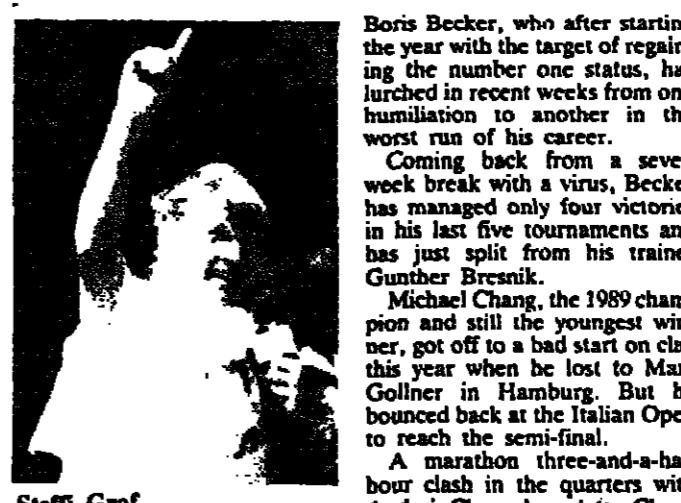
A decision to miss the early part of the European clay court season and head for Asia paid off spectacularly for Pete Sampras. He won three tournaments and took full advantage of Courier's stumbles to take over as number one.

While Graf struggles to pull her psyche together, Jim Courier should have no confidence problems as he bids for a third consecutive men's title.

Only Bjorn Borg, who won



Monica Seles tells reporters about her condition after being stabbed while playing in the Hamburg Women's Tournament last month



Steffi Graf

four of his six titles on the trot between 1978 and 81, has achieved that before and Courier's displacement from the top of the rankings earlier this year suggested a more open tournament than last year, when the American dropped one set in seven matches.

But in Rome last week Courier looked to be back to his best as he scythed his way through a top-quality field to win the Italian Open.

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JORDAN TIMES, WEDNESDAY, MAY 19, 1993

Women skiers do not like Lillehammer course

NEW YORK (AP) — Imagine holding the Masters at the neighbourhood par-3, or the Indy 500 in the supermarket parking lot. That's how most of the world's best women skiers feel about staging the Olympic downhill on the flat, featureless Hafjell Course near Lillehammer, Norway, never February.

They are joined in their dislike for the course by the International Ski Federation (FIS). That Monday repeated its support of the skiers in calling for the women's race to be moved further north, to the demanding men's course at Kvitfjell.

Among the most outspoken of the women is the one with arguably the biggest stake in the race: defending gold medalist Kertin Lee-Gartner. She won her title at Meribel, France, on the "Rock of Fer" — the iron face — the Bernhard Russi-designed course that posed the steepest challenge ever faced by women.

As far as the racers were concerned, there was no going back. They'd proven they could handle a course designed by a men's Olympic champion.

That's why Lee-Gartner and the rest were so disappointed when they saw Hafjell.

"When you drove into town you couldn't even see a mountain," she said of her first look at the course. And things got no better after.

The women got together and called on organisers to move the women's downhill to Kvitfjell, a twisting, turning, high-speed, piece of real estate on which only a top downhill could excel.

Chesnokov, revitalised by a final appearance in Hamburg, where he lost to Michael Stich and Gollner, who beat Edberg and Ivan Lendl to win the Nice Open, is among the band of players that feel at home on clay and are capable of giving bigger names a nasty shock.

Andrei Medvedev, a winner at Estoril and Barcelona already this season, is another in the category, although there are many prepared to bet that the 18-year-old Ukrainian will go all the way here.

In stating their intention to keep the Olympic race at Hafjell, organisers have the backing of the International Olympic Committee. But the matter may not be closed. The FIS is the agency charged with conducting the Olympic alpine competition, and so it's weight, if brought to bear, can be a considerable influence.

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